

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

A complete listing of the claims is provided below. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A lip keeper support system for use with a dock leveler having a pivotal lip, comprising:

a lip holder comprising at least two lip supporting positions wherein each of the at least two lip supporting positions, when fully engaged by the lip, stops downward travel of the lip.

2. (Original) A lip keeper support system according to claim 1, wherein the lip holder further comprises at least one body defining or carrying at least one lip supporting position.

3. (Original) A lip keeper support system according to claim 2, wherein the at least one body is at least a first body and a second body, the first body defining or carrying a first lip supporting position and the second body defining or carrying a second lip supporting position.

4. (Original) A lip keeper support system according to claim 2, wherein the at least one body defines or carries at least two lip supporting positions.

5. (Original) A lip keeper support system according to claim 1, wherein at least one of the at least two lip supporting positions defines or carries a lip retaining portion.

6. (Original) A lip keeper support system according to claim 5, wherein each of the at least two lip supporting positions defines or carries a lip retaining portion.

7. (Original) A lip keeper support system according to 5, wherein the at least one of the at least two lip supporting positions includes a raised area and a recessed area, and wherein the raised area is the lip retaining portion.

8. (Currently Amended) A lip keeper support system according to claim 6, wherein each of the at least two lip supporting positions has a profile chosen from a U-shaped profile, a V-shaped profile, an L-shaped profile, or a modified L-shaped profile having an upright section located at an angle greater than ninety degrees with respect to a substantially horizontal portion of the modified L-shaped profile.

9. (Original) A lip keeper support system according to claim 1, wherein the at least two supporting positions is a first supporting position and a second supporting position, and the second supporting position is displaced from the first supporting position vertically and horizontally.

10. (Cancelled).

11. (Currently Amended) A dock leveler, comprising:

a ramp;

a lip pivotally attached to the ramp; and

a lip holder comprising at least two lip supporting positions, wherein each of the at least two lip supporting positions is configured to engage the lip and stop downward travel of the lip.

12. (Original) A dock leveler according to claim 11, wherein the lip is configured to pivot from a raised position to a pendant position through various lowered positions, and the at least two lip supporting positions includes a first lip supporting position configured to engage the

lip in the pendant position, and a second lip supporting position configured to engage the lip in a lowered position.

13. (Original) A dock leveler according to claim 11, wherein the at least two lip supporting positions includes a first lip supporting position and a second lip supporting position, the first lip supporting position is configured to cooperate with the lip to support the ramp in a substantially dock level position, and the second lip supporting position is configured to cooperate with the lip to support the ramp at a first below dock level position.

14. (Original) A dock leveler according to claim 11, wherein the dock leveler is an upwardly-biased, mechanically-operated dock leveler.

15. (Original) A dock leveler according to claim 11, further comprising at least one support leg apparatus for supporting the ramp at a below dock level position.

16. (Original) A dock leveler according to claim 15, wherein the support leg apparatus comprises a support leg biased toward a forward position, configured to retract when the ramp falls slower than a predetermined rate, and configured to maintain the forward position when the ramp falls at or greater than a predetermined rate.

17. (Original) A dock leveler according to claim 15, wherein the support leg apparatus is configured to support the ramp at a first and a second below dock level position, and the support leg apparatus comprises a support leg configured to pivot from a forward position to a retracted position through intermediate positions, wherein the support leg retracts toward the retracted position when the ramp falls slower than a predetermined rate, maintains the forward position when the ramp falls at or greater than a predetermined rate toward the first below dock level

position, maintains an intermediate support position if the support leg has begun to retract toward the retracted position and then falls at or greater than a predetermined rate toward the second below dock level position.

18. (Original) A dock leveler according to claim 13, wherein the dock leveler further comprises a support leg apparatus for supporting the ramp at a second below dock level position which is lower than the first below dock level position.

19. (Original) A dock leveler according to claim 18, wherein the support leg apparatus comprises at least one automatically-retracting, forwardly-biased support leg.

20. (Currently Amended) A lip keeper support system for use with a dock leveler having a pivotable lip, comprising:

a multi-tiered lip holder means for engaging the lip and stopping the lip from downward travel and supporting the dock leveler at more than one position.

21. (Original) A lip keeper support system according to claim 20, wherein the multi-tiered lip holder means comprises at least one body defining or carrying at least one lip supporting position.

22. (Original) A lip keeper support system according to claim 21, wherein the at least one body is at least a first body defining or carrying a first lip supporting position and at least a second body defining or carrying a second lip supporting position.

23. (Original) A lip keeper support system according to claim 22, wherein the at least one body defines or carries at least two lip supporting positions.

24. (Currently Amended) A method of supporting a dock leveler having a lip pivotally mounted to a ramp, comprising:

securing a first lip engagement apparatus below the ramp in a location wherein the first lip engagement apparatus is configured to engage[s] and stop downward travel of the lip when fully engaged by the lip when the lip is in a pendant position and the ramp is in a substantially dock level position, and

securing a second lip engagement apparatus below the ramp at a location wherein the second lip engagement apparatus engages and supports the lip to stop downward travel of the lip if the lip should miss the first lip engagement apparatus and continue to a below dock level position.

25. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein the below dock level position is about 2.5 inches below dock level.

26. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein the first lip engagement apparatus and the second lip engagement apparatus are a single unit such that the step of securing the first lip engagement apparatus and the step of securing the second lip engagement are simultaneous.

27. (Cancelled).

28. (Cancelled).

29. (Cancelled).

30. (Cancelled).

31. (Cancelled).

32. (Cancelled).

33. (Cancelled).

34. (Cancelled).

35. (Cancelled).

36. (Original) The dock leveler of claim 19, wherein at least one support leg has at least two support positions.